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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Cuba: draft resolution

Special Committee decision of 10 June 2002 concerning Puerto Rico

The Special Committee,

Bearing in mind the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, as well as the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico,

Considering that the decade of the 1990s was proclaimed by the General Assembly, in its resolution 43/47 of 22 November 1988, as the Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and that by resolution 55/146 of 8 December 2000, the General Assembly declared the period 2001-2010 the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism,

Bearing in mind the 21 resolutions and decisions adopted by the Special Committee on the question of Puerto Rico, contained in the reports of the Special Committee to the General Assembly,

Recalling that 25 July 2003 marks the one hundred and fifth anniversary of the intervention in Puerto Rico by the United States of America,

Also recalling the diverse initiatives taken by the political representatives of Puerto Rico and the United States in recent years, which have thus far failed to set in motion the process of decolonization of Puerto Rico,

Stressing the need for the United States to lay the groundwork for the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico,

Taking into account the measures adopted by both Chambers of the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico recommending the convening of a Status Assembly of the people of Puerto Rico as part of the search for procedures that would make it possible to launch the process of decolonization of Puerto Rico,

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Aware that Vieques Island, Puerto Rico, has been used for over 60 years by the United States Marines to carry out military manoeuvres, thereby limiting access by the civilian population to an area equivalent to barely a quarter of the island, with negative consequences for the health of the population, the environment and the economic and social development of that Puerto Rican municipality,

Taking note with satisfaction of the decision adopted by the Government of the United States of America to put an end to the bombings and military manoeuvres on Vieques Island from 1 May 2003,

Recognizing that such decision is the outcome of the prolonged process held during years of peaceful protests carried out by the people of Puerto Rico as well as the wide campaign of international solidarity, which has been appropriately reflected in the works and documents of the Special Committee,

Noting also the consensus existing in the people and the Government of Puerto Rico on the necessity of realizing the devolution to the people of Puerto Rico of the territories previously used in military manoeuvres, as well as its decontamination,

Recalling the release of 11 Puerto Rican political prisoners in 2000,

Noting the consensus among the people of Puerto Rico in favour of the release of the four Puerto Rican political prisoners who are still serving sentences in United States prisons for cases related to the struggle for Puerto Rico's independence,

Noting that the final document of the Thirteenth Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in Kuala Lumpur on 24 and 25 February 2003, reaffirms the right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence on the basis of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and requests the Special Committee to continue actively pursuing the issue of Puerto Rico,

Having heard statements and testimonies representative of various viewpoints among the people of Puerto Rico and their social institutions,

Having considered the report of the Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the implementation of the resolutions concerning Puerto Rico,[1]

1. *Reaffirms* the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the applicability of the fundamental principles of that resolution to the question of Puerto Rico;

2. *Reiterates* that the Puerto Rican people constitute a Latin American and Caribbean nation that has its own unequivocal national identity;

3. *Calls upon* the Government of the United States of America to assume its responsibility of expediting a process that will allow the Puerto Rican people fully to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the resolutions and decisions of the Special Committee concerning Puerto Rico;

4. *Notes with satisfaction* that, in recent years, progress has been achieved towards the implementation of a mechanism that would ensure the full participation

[1] A/AC.109/2003/L.___.

of representatives of all viewpoints prevailing in Puerto Rico, such as the proposals to convene a status Assembly of the people of Puerto Rico, based on the principle that any initiative for the solution of the political status of Puerto Rico should be originally taken by the people of Puerto Rico;

5. *Reiterates* the hope that the General Assembly will give comprehensive consideration to the question of Puerto Rico in all its aspects;

6. *Urges* the Government of the United States, in line with the need to guarantee the Puerto Rican people their legitimate right to self-determination and the protection of their human rights, return the occupied land on Vieques Island to the people of Puerto Rico, respect fundamental human rights, such as the right to health and economic development, assume the execution and the costs of the decontamination process of the impact areas previously used in military manoeuvres, and take care of the serious consequences to the health of the inhabitants of Vieques Island and the environmental degradation;

7. *Requests* the President of the United States of America to release all Puerto Rican political prisoners serving sentences in United States prisons for cases related to the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico;

8. *Notes with satisfaction* the report prepared by the Rapporteur of the Special Committee,[1] in compliance with its resolution of 10 June 2002;

9. *Requests* the Rapporteur to report to the Special Committee in 2004 on the implementation of the present resolution;

10. *Decides* to keep the question of Puerto Rico under continuous review.